



NEWS RELEASE

WSD aligns French Immersion expansion with community needs

May 11, 2015 (Winnipeg, MB) – At a special board meeting tonight, Winnipeg School Division (WSD) Board of Trustees announced that effective September 2015, Sir William Osler School will operate as a second site to École LaVérendrye for students from Nursery to Grade 1.

The decision comes after several months of community consultations. Throughout the process, the Board identified three key principles to align with the community's needs: minimize disruption to families; provide consistency in terms of daycare; and support the needs of the community.

"With these principles in mind and the results from the consultations, the Board agreed that Robert H. Smith and Earl Grey schools will continue unchanged for the 2015/16 school year," said Board Chair, Mark Wasyliw. "We are distributing a summary consultant's report to parents in the École LaVérendrye, Earl Grey and École Robert H. Smith School community detailing the consultation results and the plan moving forward."

In addition to the report, WSD is holding a town hall meeting on Tuesday, May 26 at 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at École secondaire Kelvin High School to discuss the results.

"In order to address space requirements for École LaVérendrye, we are proceeding with the necessary arrangements to have the Sir William Osler facility operate as a second school site in September 2015," said Wasyliw. "In essence, École LaVérendrye will become one school with two sites."

Wasyliw thanked the community who made presentations at Board meetings and responded to the consultation surveys and focus groups. "We heard the urgency from the École LaVérendrye parents and believe this plan addresses both the immediate need for space and the long term issue of expanding our popular French Immersion program."

WSD will immediately take measures at Sir William Osler School and École LaVérendrye to ensure they are ready for students in September.

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Backgrounder

Measures required at Sir William Osler location:

To ensure necessary resources and facilities are in place for students, renovations will begin immediately to prepare classrooms and office space.

- Transportation to address the enrolment at École LaVérendrye effective September 2015, the Nursery to Grade 1 students attending École LaVérendrye will be transported each day to Sir William Osler for the French Immersion program. (Children who are in Nursery – Grade 1 who live within walking distance may walk to school.)
- Staffing
 - a. A Vice-Principal from École LaVérendrye will be assigned at the facility.
 - b. Clerical support and custodian services will be provided.
 - c. Crossing Guards will be assigned.
 - d. Additional Supervisory staff time may also be required for students.
 - e. Supervision for Grade 1 students remaining at Sir William Osler during the lunch hour for the lunch program.
 - f. All programming currently provided to students would be maintained eg. Music, library, technology, physical education, child care and additional reading recovery supports.
- Classroom preparation, painting, lighting, flooring and electrical requirements will be addressed.
- Repurposing of “gymnasium” space; repair floors and prepare space for physical education programming (Note: this area is suitable for early years children only due to the size (2000 ft²) and low ceilings.
- Washroom modifications.
- Play structure to be available for beginning of the school year.
- Other costs eg. facility, equipment, technology

Measures required at École LaVérendrye Underway

- New electrical outlets throughout the school. New wireless access throughout the school.
- Upgrading of second floor salle Riel Room to provide new electrical for computers, new flooring throughout and painting.
- Two washroom renovations.
- Future classroom upgrades to be determined

Status of École LaVérendrye gym addition and renovations:

- Received approval from PSFB to proceed to tender April 2014
- Project to be issued for tender in May 2015
- Contract award project projected before end of June 2015
- Construction start summer 2015
- Completion fall 2016/early 2017

With the Nursery to Grade 1 program being offered at the second site at Sir William Osler, five additional classrooms will be available for students at École LaVérendrye, as well as an opportunity to increase after school programming for students.

Longer Term Solution for French Immersion Programming

- Discussions will continue to study and review the enrolment in the French Immersion Program across WSD. The long term plan will include an assessment of current boundaries, capping enrolment, and/or utilizing existing space in WSD to provide program options to our students and families.
- Earl Grey School - discussions will continue to determine the feasibility of a Dual Track French Immersion Program being offered at Earl Grey School for the 2016/2017 school year.
- Sir William Osler - proceed with a request to the Province for additional new space. As the existing gym does not meet current provincial standards, the Board of Trustees will request funding from the Public Schools Finance Board to establish a permanent milieu school.
- École LaVérendrye - continue discussions with the Province for an additional classroom. Identify longer term major capital improvement on the WSD's 5-Year Capital Plan for a new gym addition or a new school on same site.